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Mr. Speaker, I rise in tribute to the 2001- 2002 Sacramento Kings, one of the most exciting and formidable teams in the National Basketball Association. The 2001-2002 Kings completed the greatest season in franchise history by taking the two-time defending World Champions, the Los Angeles Lakers, to the brink of elimination in a fiercely contested seven game series. Although the season ended short of a Championship, the 2001-2002 Kings demonstrated remarkable courage, determination, and promise that have surely made them a great source of civic pride and a perennial NBA powerhouse for years to come. I ask all of my colleagues to join with me in saluting the remarkable 2001-2002 Sacramento Kings.

Throughout the course of the season, the 2001-2002 Sacramento Kings showed tremendous character in overcoming numerous obstacles. Despite losing star players Chris Webber and Peja Stojakovic for significant portions of the season, the Kings finished the regular season with a league best mark of 61 wins and 21 losses. The Kings won the franchise's first division championship since relocating to Sacramento in 1985. By combining a high-octane offense and a tenacious defense, this year's Kings posted the best overall record, home record and road record in franchise history. It is clear that the 2001-2002 Sacramento Kings are the most successful team in the franchise's illustrious 54 year history.

The Kings began their postseason campaign in fine form, as they only needed four games to conquer their old nemesis, the Utah Jazz. In the next round, the Kings overcame significant injuries to Peredrag Stojakovic and Doug Christie to defeat a talented Dallas Mavericks team by a four games to one margin. In the Western Conference finals, the Kings locked horns with the Los Angeles Lakers in one of the most hotly contested and memorable playoff series in NBA history. Although the Kings would lose the series after stretching the ultimate seventh game into overtime, their outstanding performance throughout the playoffs cemented the Kings status as one of the preeminent teams in the NBA today and the dominant team of the future.

The 2001-2002 Sacramento Kings are comprised of an outstanding blend of superstar players, seasoned veterans, and exciting young players. This Kings team is spearheaded by the all around excellence of All-Stars Chris Webber and Peredrag Stojakovic. On defense, the Kings are lead by defensive stalwart and All NBA Defensive Second Team member Doug Christie. Skillful big men Vlade Divac, Scot Pollard, and Lawrence Funderburke provide consistent play in the paint. The boundless energy and exuberance of Mike Bibby, Bobby Jackson, and Hidayet Turkoglu fuels the Kings trademark high-power offense. High-flying rookie Gerald Wallace and the talented Mateen Cleaves provide an enticing glimpse into the team's future with their enormous potential. To round off the roster, solid veterans Chucky Brown and Brent Price provide steady and valuable leadership on the floor and in the locker room. This dazzling group of players, combined with a selfless commitment to team play, are major reasons why the Kings enjoyed such unparalleled success during the 2001-2002 season.

In addition to a wonderful roster, the 2001-2002 Kings also benefited greatly from the tutelage of one of the best coaching staffs and the leadership of one of the most progressive front offices in the NBA. On the bench, the 2001-2002 Kings were lead by head coach Rick Adelman and assistant coaches Pete Carril, John Wetzel and Elston Turner. These coaches were able to harness one of the greatest collections of talented players in the NBA into a balanced scoring team that is epitomized by team play and an unyielding commitment to defense. In the front office, the Kings are led by the visionary ownership of the Maloof Family and the astute personnel moves of team president Geoff Petrie. Under the ownership of the Maloof Family, the Kings have taken great steps to forge one of the most unique and strongest relationships in all of sports with their team supporters. Given the Kings' front office's commitment to the city of Sacramento, it is no wonder why Kings fans are widely regarded as the most spirited and most loyal fans in America.

Mr. Speaker, as the Sacramento Kings conclude its greatest season in franchise history and prepare to achieve greater triumphs in the future, I am honored to pay tribute to the many hard working men and women of the Kings organization who brought so much joy and pride to the people of Sacramento and Kings' fans everywhere. Their successes are considerable, and it is a great honor for me to have the opportunity to pay tribute to their accomplishments. I ask all my colleagues to join with me in congratulating the Sacramento Kings on a wonderful season and wishing them greater success in future seasons.